

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

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APPROVED BY CTF - MR. KARKASHIAN
PC - MR. HANSEN (DRAFT)
ARA - MR. COX (DRAFT)
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S/S:AOTTO
-----282135Z 035733 /73
O 282100Z APR 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 096292

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, CASC, ASEC, CO

SUBJECT: PCV STARR KIDNAPPING - INTERMEDIARY

REF: (A) BOGOTA 3269; (B) BOGOTA 3247; (C) BOGOTA 1881

1. WASHINGTON TASK FORCE (CTF) MET APRIL 20 TO CONSIDER
EMBASSY'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE QUESTION OF AN INTERMEDIARY,
AND OTHER MATTERS WHICH WILL BE DEALT WITH SEPARATELY.

2. CTF DISCUSSED AT LENGTH MERITS OF EMBASSY'S EIGHT POTEN-
TIAL CANDIDATES FOR INTERMEDIARY ROLE AND ITS REASONS FOR
PREFERRING THAT AN INTERMEDIARY FROM OUTSIDE COLOMBIA BE
SOUGHT. CTF SHARES SOME OF EMBASSY'S APPREHENSIONS REGARD-
ING RECRUITMENT, SUITABILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF A RESIDENT
INTERMEDIARY BUT ON BALANCE BELIEVES INTERMEDIARY NECES-

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SARILY MUST BE RESIDENT WITH PROPER CONNECTIONS, LANGUAGE
QUALIFICATIONS AND LOCAL RAPPORT. FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL CON-
SIDERATIONS EMERGED FROM CTF DISCUSSION:

(A) SIX OF EIGHT EMBASSY NOMINEES ARE HIGHLY VISIBLE
BUSINESSMEN REPRESENTING PRIMARILY AMERICAN MULTINATIONAL
FIRMS AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS. CTF QUESTIONS APPRO-

PRIATENESS OF INTERMEDIARY FOR PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER WITH AMERICAN QUOTE BIG-BUSINESS UNQUOTE IMAGE. IN ADDITION

TO NULLIFYING EFFECT ON DESIRED PUBLIC IMAGE OF PEACE CORPS, THERE IS RISK OF FUELING FARC EXPECTATIONS OF BIGGER RANSOM THEREBY RAISING FURTHER OBSTACLES TO EARLY, SAFE RELEASE OF STARR.

(B) WITHOUT DISPARAGING THE INHERENT RISKS TO AND HANDICAPS OF RESIDENT INTERMEDIARY, MOST CTF MEMBERS ALSO WERE CONCERNED THAT A SUITABLY QUALIFIED OUTSIDE INTERMEDIARY WOULD BE UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO REMAIN IN BOGOTA THROUGHOUT A PROTRACTED NEGOTIATION NOT TO MENTION THE CONSIDERABLE EXPENSE OF TEMPORARY RESIDENCE. A POSSIBILITY, SO FAR UNEXPLORED, MIGHT BE TO ARRANGE THE TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENT OF A SUITABLY QUALIFIED NON-RESIDENT PRIEST. IT IS AN IDEA WHICH MIGHT BE TRIED IF A DECISION IS TAKEN TO APPROACH EITHER OF THE PRIESTS MENTIONED IN (REF A). IN THAT EVENT THE CTF WOULD FAVOR THE REVEREND MAITREJEAN BECAUSE OF HIS PEACE CORPS BACKGROUND.

(C) AT THIS STAGE, IN WEIGHING ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS, SPECIAL CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN THEIR RELATIVE EFFECT ON ENCOURAGING MRS. JENSEN TO REMAIN IN THE US AT LEAST AS LONG AS THERE IS NO HELPFUL ROLE FOR HER TO PLAY IN COLOMBIA. THIS INCLUDES SELECTION OF A RELIABLE ON-SCENE INTERMEDIARY IN WHOM MRS. JENSEN CAN MAINTAIN CONFIDENCE FROM A DISTANCE. CTF CONSIDERS THIS IMPORTANT NOT ONLY FOR PROTECTION OF MRS. JENSEN FROM DIRECT APPROACHES BY EITHER
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KIDNAPPERS OR OTHER CRIMINALS AND OPPORTUNISTS, BUT ALSO TO PRESERVE A PUBLICLY ACCEPTABLE EXPLANATION OF EMBASSY CONTACT WITH INTERMEDIARY IN PRIVATE PARTY NEGOTIATIONS AS COMMUNICATIONS LINK WITH MRS. JENSEN THROUGH DEPARTMENT.

3. FOR THE ABOVE REASONS, CTF REQUESTS EMBASSY TO TAKE ANOTHER LOOK IN NON-BUSINESS, NON-FOREIGN CIRCLES FOR POTENTIAL INTERMEDIARIES. WHILE MINDFUL OF EMBASSY'S EARLIER VIEWS (REF C) ON POSSIBLE INTERMEDIARIES FOR A HUMANITARIAN APPEAL, CTF WONDERS WHETHER QUALIFIED, POSSIBLY LEFTIST LAWYER, JOURNALIST, DEPUTY OR OTHER PERSON OF SUITABLE STATURE COULD BE FOUND WITH SOME PERCEPTION OF A VESTED INTEREST IN FACILITATING THE SAFE RELEASE OF STARR.

4. EMBASSY'S CONSIDERED VIEWS AND ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE APPRECIATED.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: KIDNAPPING
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 28-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE096292
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: RFINCH:IJG
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770149-0167
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977048/aaaaagfp.tel
Line Count: 114
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 39d7c9a8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 77 BOGOTA 3269, 77 BOGOTA 3247, 77 BOGOTA 1881
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2873922
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PCV STARR KIDNAPPING - INTERMEDIARY
TAGS: PINS, CASC, ASEC, CO, US, PC, (STARR, RICHARD)
To: BOGOTA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/39d7c9a8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009